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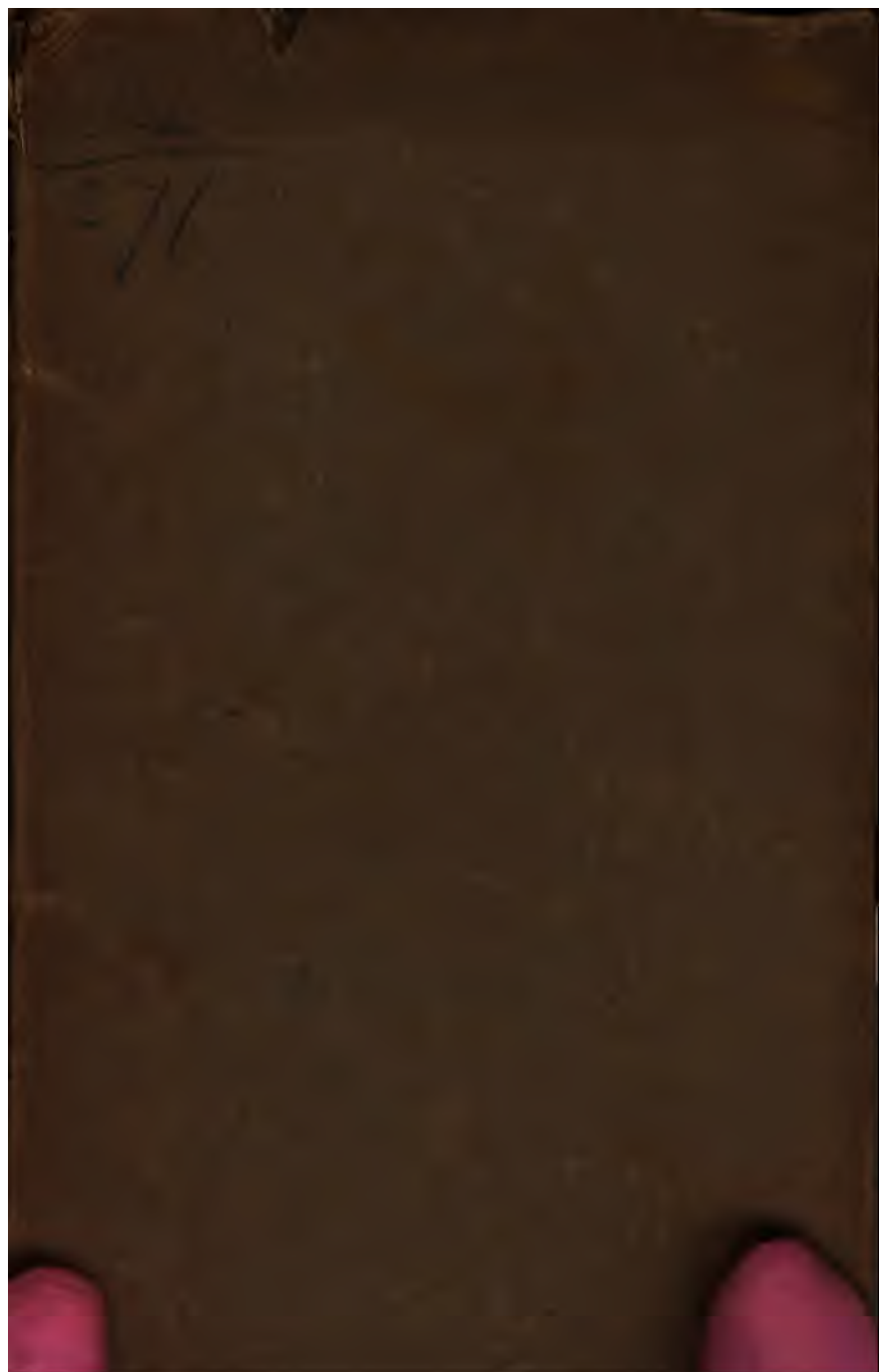
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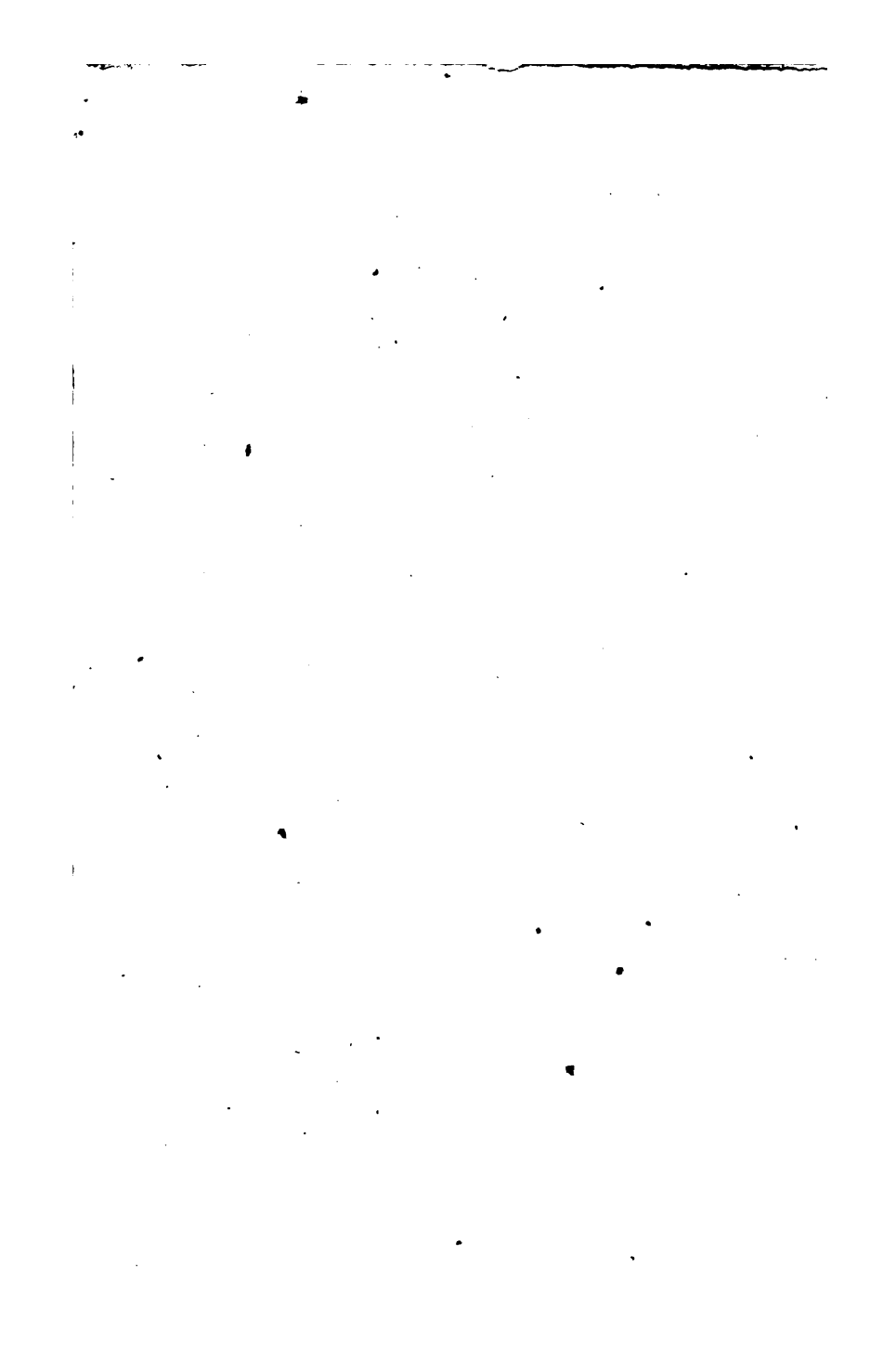


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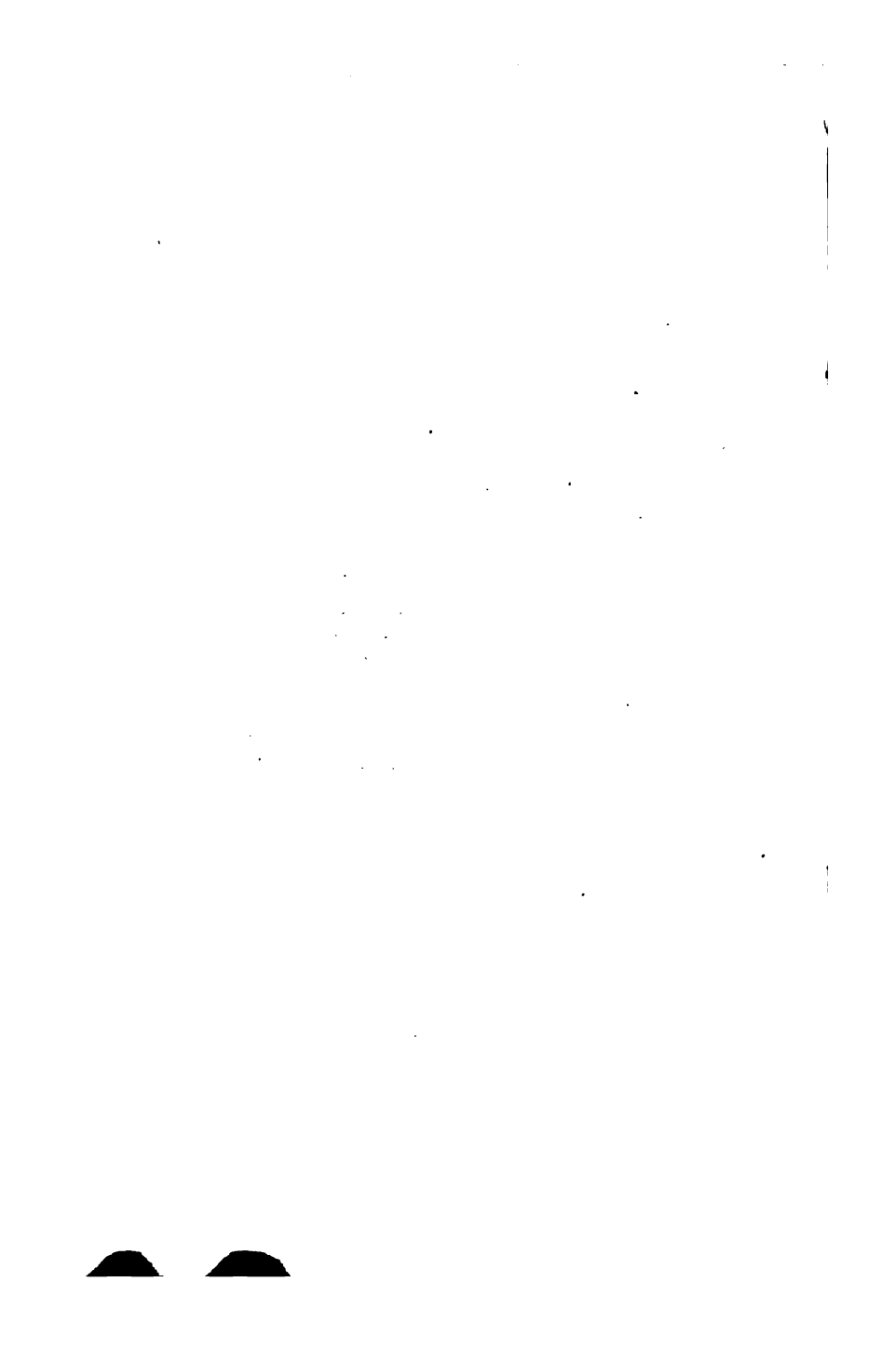
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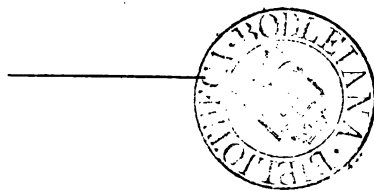




I N A, &c.



I N A ;
AND
OTHER FRAGMENTS,
IN VERSE.

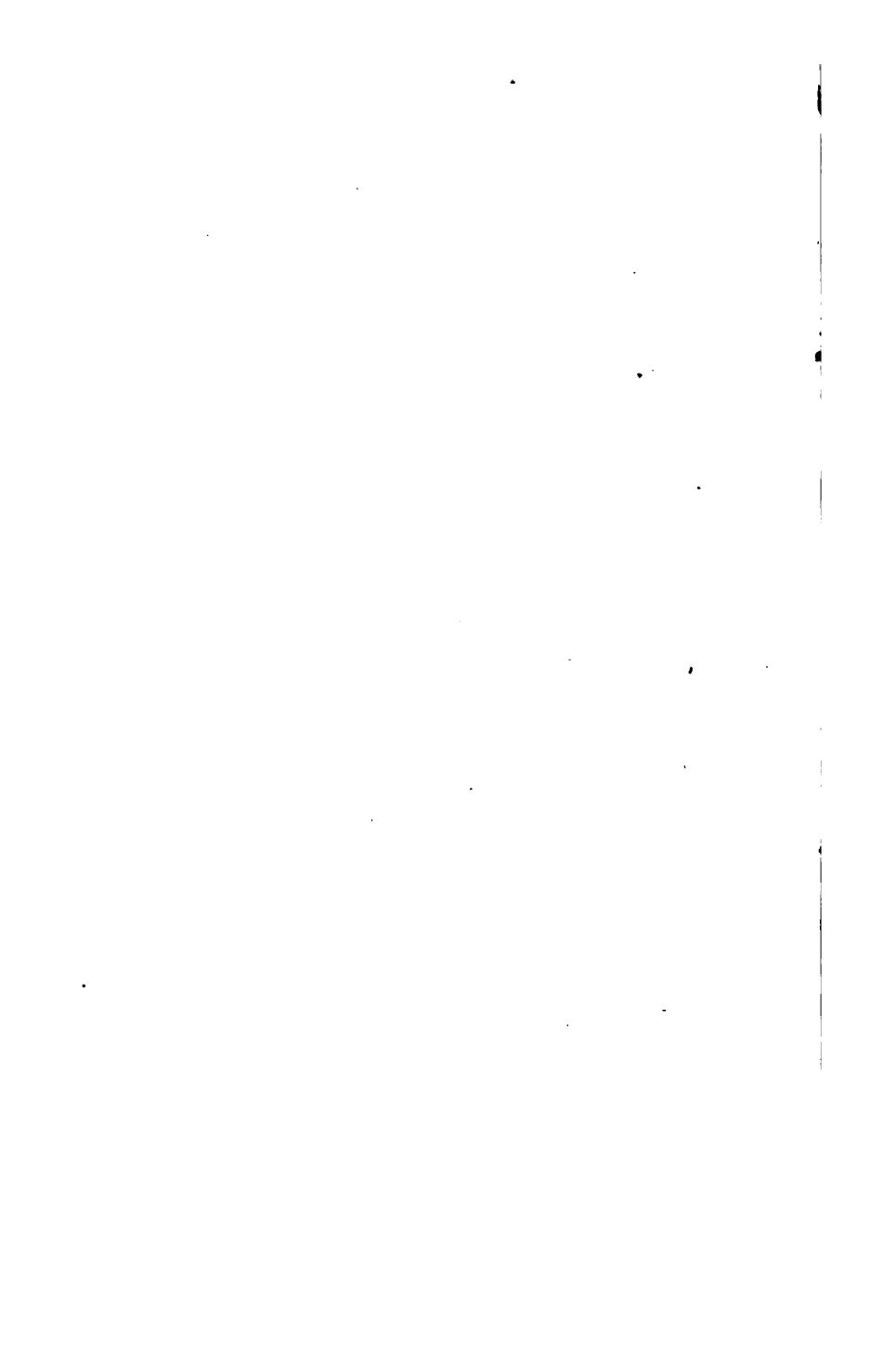


" Such elfn spirits as may have perchance
A power to bend the lazy sail of Time,
Or be the car-men of a lagging hour."

GLASGOW :
Printed at the University Press.

MDCCCXXXIV.

271.



PREFACE.

MOST COURTEOUS READER,

In a small volume of poetical Fragments such as this, you will possibly find but little to interest—little that will induce you to return to its pages, should you ever possess so much of the worthy Sir Roger de Coverley's disposition as once to read the book; but if you do so, and in course of the perusal, find its beauties, should it have any, too few to counterbalance its faults, I pray you throw it aside, nor tempt yourself, Gentle Reader, to be over critical on a work, which, may not aspire to the honour of standing too severe

a test. As to the gentlemen of the press, these sentinels of public taste, they will doubtless act as becomes them. I am, as Horace somewhere says,

"Egregii mortalem altique silenti."

I shall neither crave their good-will, nor try to turn aside their censure. Leaving, therefore, those trifles to the guidance of their own fortune.

I subscribe myself

Your most obedient servant,

MARKHAM.

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I N A.

I.

IN summer beauty's dawning hour,
Young Ina graced the guarded tent,
While by her side the soldier flower
Of Algesir and Syria bent,
And at her feet the treasured gold
Of half a nation's age was flung
By him, who knelt beside and told
Her of a passion-spell which clung
Around his heart—a sweetened sting,
Beyond the mind's imagining.

II.

And thus he spoke, while flashed the power
Of love within his eye of jet
Brighter than all the gems he wore
Entwined upon his gold aigrett;
And while its influence seemed to move
In passing shadow o'er his brow,
Telling as if the force of love
Ne'er triumphed o'er his heart till now,
And that it chafed the O'thman's pride,
To own the power he deified :—

III.

“ Behold ! young stranger of the west,
Thou garden rose of fair Castile,
To thee is bent a warrior's crest,
And at thy feet a prince doth kneel,
Who ne'er to aught of mortal birth
Before this hour hath bent the knee,
Nor ever yet to child of earth
Made such an offering as to thee—
An offering which a queen might rise
To grasp at as a godly prize.

IV.

“ And yet, proud girl, thine eye 's as cold,
As if some wooer sought thy hand
Whose gifts, though numbered thousandfold,
Were worthless as the desert sand
Compared with those which I have placed
This hour, before thy beauty's shrine :
And such, by heaven ! as oft have graced
The proudest queen of Selim's line
May well, my christian maid, be set
Upon thy bridal coronet !

V.

“ Look round thee, far as eye can trace
One spot of earth on which to dwell,
A land is smiling in the face
Of yon blue heaven, as if to tell
A tale of nature's fairest reign,
Of spring in her eternal dress,
Ay, of a scene whence heaven might gain
Itself a ray of loveliness,
Had such a world the power to fling
One beauty back on beauty's spring.

VI.

“ Gaze on, 'tis such a matchless scene
As well may charm a maiden's eye ;
But still one other power, I ween,
Is there to claim the fealty
Of that high soul, whose living glance
Now sparkles lightly through the gloom
Of thy dark eyelash, to entrance
A world beneath love's gentle doom—
To fascinate, but not to steal
From those it charms the power to feel.

VII.

“ Behold, where now on every side
Our tents do redden like the spell
Of fiery night, when onward ride
The spirits of the Samyel ;¹
While far away, by mount and stream,
Shines forth the prophet's sacred sign,
And Syria's thousand sabres gleam
Beneath the palm-tree and the vine !
Look on the whole—then maiden say,
If these win not thy heart away.

VIII.

“ Deign but one single glance to cast
Upon the scene that spreads below,
And, when thy eye hath wandering passed
O'er all which at thy footstool bow,
Then do thou say, if such be not
A dower with which a prince may bless
That maid whose peerless soul hath brought
The light of her own loveliness
Nearer his heart, than e'er the power
Of beauty triumphed till this hour.

IX.

“ Own that it is a gift which well
Befits an Eastern chief to fling
At beauty's feet, that he may tell
How wide hath been love's wandering ;
Show but at least, my christian maid !
That on such love thine own can smile,
And let it o'er the world be said,
That thou wert only cold awhile,
To doubly joy the hour of bliss,
Which makes thine own a land like this.”

X.

Thus ceased the O'thman, while again,
Ambitious of its wonted sway,
Pride sought a moment to regain
The mastery love had wiled away,
And, rising from his grounded knee,
Once more by Ina's side he stood,
Half bending to love's sovereignty,
And half in pride's unbending mood,
Waiting in silence that reply,
Now kindling in the maiden's eye.

XI.

Then, like the moonlight when its sleep
Flits from Ararat's crest of snow,
Beneath the stormy mists which sweep
At midnight round the mountain's brow;
So passed away that silent look,
E'en beautiful, though yet so cold,
Neath which her spirit seemed to brook
The proffered gifts of power and gold;
And, while a richer dawning broke
On Ina's features, thus she spoke:—

XII.

“ Bright closed the eve, the vesper star
In our blue sky was seen to glide,
And gladly woke the soft guitar
Amid the vines on Ebro's side ;
While, by its waters, happy-like,
The maidens of the south were met
To thread the merry dance and strike
Awhile the merrier castanet—
Wrapt for a time in all the bliss
Of that short hour of happiness.

XIII.

“ Youth met with youth—and hope was there
The living lustre of each eye,
While holiest love looked on to share
The sun of our gay revelry—
And all was joy ; when, like a cloud
Of midnight on the face of day,
The Moslem war-cry burst aloud,
And the stained crescent led the way
To close in death or wild despair
A scene whose dawn had been so fair.

XIV.

“ The sabre gleamed in Ebro’s flood,
And soon its breast of silver light
Grew dark beneath the stream of blood
Which murder, in its hour of might,
Shed on the noble few whose hands
Were raised to shield their native Spain
Against the unbelieving bands
Who swept a curse o’er Viga’s plain—
Unpitying, in the strength which gave
To them a triumph o’er a grave.

XV.

“ Oh ! we are fallen, and the glow
Of all life’s hope may now be gone ;
Yet, deemest thou that it is so
A Spanish maiden can be won ?
Or, dost thou think that sits so light
Upon her heart a maiden’s pride,
That for a bauble rich and bright
Her honour may be turned aside,
And all her fairest fame be sold
For some set price in worthless gold ?

XVI.

" No ! as thy captive it may be
That thou wilt bind around this hand
Thy galling chains, as if to see
How long it can unbent withstand
The princely load ; but, soldier, know
That all the outstretch of thy power
Will never for an instant bow
A soul which feels, this very hour,
That it at least can still be free,
E'en in the midst of slavery."

XVII.

" By Allah ! now," the Syrian cried,
" If on thy cheek there had not played
The soul of love, I'd have defied
All that thy lovely lips have said—
I'd have recalled unto thy mind
The time when yonder Sulliot chief
By Djebail's coast his course did wind,
When thou, e'en loveliest in thy grief,
Drooped in his grasp, a flower of spring
Nipped in its fairest opening.

XVIII.

“ I might have told thee of a hand
Which stayed that Sulliot on his path
To free thee, with a goodly band
Of captive Christians, from his wrath ;
Ay, of a hand which struck to dust
That banner thou hast leagued with mine,
In whose dark deeds 'tis fit thou must
Think that a Syrian prince would join,
Because thou couldst not, loveliest, tell
By whose command the Corsair fell.²

XIX.

“ And yet, it is not all the cold,
The feigned reserve of woman's heart
Could nerve thee, girl, to seem so bold—
So fearlessly to act thy part—
Did not some hidden sunbeam play
Upon the flower-wreaths of thy soul,
Or love's soft whisper wend its way
Behind that veil which pride doth roll
Around thy heart, that it may be
Unread, unknown, to all but thee.

XX.

“ Ay, now methinks, that on the night
When round thee closed the shout of war,
And yonder sea flashed back in light
The wave of Ali's scymitar ;
There was one slave, whose eye did seem
To rest entranced on thee alone,
As if he breathed but in the stream
Of light which sparkled from thy own—
Perhaps its glance to oft'ner share
Than every other Christian there.

XXI

“ Well, it was death for him to think,
Maiden, of such a hand as thine,
Yet, can it be that thou dost shrink
For aught of this from love like mine?—
What ! will the thoughts of thy proud heart
Still act so wildly as to deem
That, even lovely as thou art,
Thy will can stay the onward stream,
Or that thou mayest with safety choose
Whether to sanction or refuse ?

XXII.

" Yes ! it is so ; across thy cheek,
By heaven itself ! there flitteth now
That blush, whose passing tint doth speak
More than the tongue may well avow—
Telling how boldly thou hast dared
To trifle with a monarch's will—
To scorn a hand which would have shared
A world with thee, and joyed to fill
Thy cup of bliss, till thou hadst been
The happiest of this earthly scene !

XXIII.

" But all is passed.—It is not meet
That I should longer sue to thee ;
A soldier's pride resumes its seat,
His path of passion must be free ;
Then think thee well, for sure as rest
On yonder plain the night shades gray,
Or certain as the golden west
Is smiling on the homes of day,
Ere beam again that setting sun,
Maiden ! thou shalt be wooed, and—won !"

XXIV.

Then bent the youthful captive's eyes
In deepened gloom upon the ground,
As if her spirit warred to rise
Above some last reserve, which bound
Her heart's proud voice, that she might speak
All that was wildly struggling there ;
While o'er her lately blooming cheek
A deathlike paleness seemed to bear
A mark, by which the eye might test
The storms which gathered in her breast.

XXV.

But, ere fair Ina well could gain
The mastery of herself to tell
All she would speak, yet tried in vain
Into the grasp of words to quell,
Her Syrian wooer raised his hand,
And like the fairy forms of old,
Quick at the sign, a girlish band
Sprung forth from many a curtain fold,
And round the stranger bent the knee,
Fair as a heavenly progeny.

XXVI.

Oh, lovely-like they knelt, and each
Held in her hand some costly gem,
Whose matchless beauty well might reach
A place on Selim's diadem,
While stuffs of gold on which the eye
Stopp'd dazzled in its gay career,
And robes of silk whose tints might vie
With the rich tissues of Cashmere,
Were borne on every arm, and laid
In smiles before the christian maid.

XXVII.

Yet scarcely had the youthful train
Bent in their homage grace before
The youthful Ina, ere again
Each raised the princely gift she bore
And gently twined the jewelled gold
Around the maiden's ivory brow,
Or flung the silken vesture's fold
Over her light corset to show
With what effect she could be seen
To sparkle as an Eastern queen.

XXVIII.

Still, 'twas not all the gems which shone
Upon the gaudy robes beneath—
The rich aigrett, the diamond zone,
The chain of gold, or pearl wreath—
Could add one other beauty where
Such beauty held its jubilee,
That e'en 'mid all the splendour there
Each eye could only Ina see,
And for herself alone admire
The splendour of her rich attire.

XXIX.

But to our tale: while they who stood
Around her showed their task complete,
And once again in lowly mood,
Retiring knelt at Ina's feet,
The Syrian chief, who by her side
Had watched awhile the girlish band,
Once more approached the youthful bride
And gently raised her trembling hand,
Pausing a moment but to trace
“The beauty breathing on her face.”

XXX.

Then waving high his signet ring,
From eye to eye the signal flew
Till, with the speed of Asrail's wing,
That curtain'd tent was torn in two ;
And, as at once the silken skreen
Was backward rolled on either hand,
Startled, the maid beheld between
A sight which could e'en then command
A moment's homage, tho' it were
To lead but to a sepulchre.

XXXI.

Spreading away before the eye,
Bright as the morn of Tibet's skies,
Was hung a waving canopy,
On which the richest heavenly dyes
Were blended with the mellow light
Of the red sunbeams as they set
In one broad streamer on the height
Of heaven's ærial minaret,
And fell in richest golden glow
Upon the tented camp below !

XXXII.

There, 'neath that dome, in proud array,
Upon a sward of velvet green,
Stretching in distance far away,
The O'thman's soldier-guards were seen ;
While, dazzling almost to excess,
Flash'd bright in many a lengthen'd line,
The Crescent with its waving tress,
The Arab lance and carabine ;
And e'en, more striking than the whole,
The golden spears of Istambol ! ⁴

XXXIII.

And, gorgeously, on either side,
Beyond the soldier bands, arose
A line of standards, which did hide
The farther view, and seemed to close
The sparkling scene ; while from their base
Some Ethiop slaves stood forth to view,
Each bearing high a silver vase,
Whence Aden's incense upward threw,
In many a mist-wreath curling free,
The soft perfumes of Araby !

XXXIV.

It was a noble sight! and now
The glance of the fair captive's eye
Was borne along upon the glow
Of that most restless sovereignty,
Whose power, 'tis said, doth often sway
Resistless in the maiden's breast,
Passing on fancied wing away,
Unheeding over all the rest,
Upon a single skreen to fall,
Which seemed to part the silken hall.

XXXV.

And there alone was fixed her gaze
Inquiring-like, till, still and slow,
Some hand unseen did upward raise
The drapery from the ground below,
And showed behind a massy throne
Of ivory, enchased with gold,
On which the setting sunbeams shone,
Reflected back a thousandfold,
In all the radiance of that hour
When first they broke on Eiram's^b bower.

XXXVI.

But as young Ina's dazzled eye
Brightest upon the pageant fell—
Too soon to bid reality
All its effect at once dispel—
Again, the Syrian soldier raised
Her hand in his, and led her on,
Amid the pomp which round them blazed,
Towards the footstool of the throne,
To step her thence in homage meet
Up to its very proudest seat.

XXXVII.

And there she sate a very queen
Of beauty, in her loveliness,
Looking as if her fate had been
Ne'er linked to mortal station less
Than monarch's bride; but yet the bloom
Of ripened hope was wanting now,
And something like a pallid gloom
Spread coldly over Ina's brow,
Beseeming ill—I well may say—
So richly graced a bridal day.

XXXVIII.

In vain to hail the happy hour
Full many a banner swept the ground,
And at her feet a nation's flower,
In proffered fealty, knelt around;
In vain the sound of music came
In swelling burst upon the ear,
While lance and standard rose again
Flashing around her far and near :
The moment of surprise was gone,
And Ina now unmov'd looked on.

XXXIX.

Then well the chief beside her knew,
By every hectic flush which passed
Across her cheek in varied hue,
That still around her heart was cast
That maiden pride, which, it may be,
He only wished the more to tame,
As knights would test their chivalry
By the hard tasks they overcame ;
For still her hand, the Syrian pressed,
And thus again the maid addressed :—

XL.

“ Well, Peri, now that thou hast seen
A picture of the wealth, and state,
Which upon Ahmet's chosen queen
Must, like a genii slave, await
To shrine her beauty, and extend
Her power beyond earth's noblest line ;
Say, can thy wish from this descend
To such a lowly world as thine,
To pass in beauty's hour of bloom,
Unknown, uncared for, to the tomb.

XLI.

“ It cannot be,—and I can now
Read in those looks what thou wouldst say,
That here at last thou wilt avow
Thy well-hid passion and obey.
Allah be praised ! that on thy heart
Love now resumes its gentler power,
Then, as its pride doth all depart,
Give welcome to a happier hour,
And smile, my christain maid, to light
The honours of thy bridal night.”

XLII.

" Well mayest thou think," the maiden said,
 " Whose dream is all of gather'd gold,
That at its sound may honour fade,
 And love itself be bought and sold ;—
Yet I will speak not, where the slave
 Of all thy insult here I stand :
A woman's words were weak to save
 Her life, perhaps, from such a hand—
But my own father's God will be
My safety, ere I wed with thee !"

XLIII.

Thus as she spoke, young Ina fell,
 Exhausted, back upon the throne,
While, wrathful-like, that she should tell
 So freely what her words made known,
The Syrian cast a fiery look
 Of anger on the fearless maid,
Which might a firmer soul have shook,
 If then a glance could have dismayed ;
Or the mere threatening of an eye
Leagued fear to sorrow's poignancy.

XLIV.

And turning toward the silent crowd,
Whose arms gleamed round him, far and near,
“ Ho ! Hassan Reis ! ” he cried aloud,
“ Bring forth thy christian prisoners here,
And let a band of Bedoueneens
Prepare their bowstrings : we shall try
What fortune waits such gentler means
When every other source is dry :
'Tis like the strangers of the West
But scorn a love in sunshine dressed !

XLV.

“ And, maiden, thou mayest better love
A soul, perchance, of iron mould,
Than one whose passions can but move
'Tween flowery banks and sands of gold ;—
By yonder heaven ! I might have guessed
That thy proud heart would never own
The power of my cold homage, lest
It might be said 'twas easily won :
Well ! time is given to change it still—
What ! slaves ! have ye not heard my will ? ”

XLVI.

On sped the order, and, ere long,
 Across the motionless array,
A gentle wind-gust swept along,
 Rustling each banner on its way ;
While, from the distance of the tent,
 A lengthened line of sabres glanced,
Marking a silent train who bent
 Their heads in gloom as they advanced,
Led on by many an armed guide,
Between the ranks on either side.

XLVII.

Slowly they came, a pallid band,
 It might be eight, or ten were there,
On whom 'twas easily seen the hand
 Of misery did not lightly bear ;
So firmly had a dungeon set
 It's deadly blight on every face,
E'en as they passed, it seemed that yet
 On more than one the eye could trace
The baneful earth-damp, as its streak
Blanched leaden-like on every cheek.

XLVIII.

No voice was there, no sound awoke
Amid the onward moving throng,
Save when, at times, some fetter broke
The silence as it dragged along ;
And every captive's eye was then
Bent dark and thoughtfully upon
The earth they trod, nor even when
They stopped before th' Otteman throne
Was there an eye raised from the ground,
To glance upon the scene around.

XLIX.

Then bending low, the Syrian guard
Knelt prostrate at their leader's feet,
Nor dared to raise their eyes toward
The splendour of the sacred seat ;
Till, with a single word, he bade
The crouching band again retire :
And fixing, vengeful-like, 'tis said,
On Ina's eye a glance of fire,
He turned from her with scowling brow
To mark his victims placed below.

L.

“ And where,” he cried, “ is yonder slave,
Who dared to head this rebel band,
And feared not too, by heaven ! to brave
The vengeance of a monarch’s hand ?
God of the prophet ! did he think
To beard the O’tzman in his might,
Or break one single fetter’s link,
By madly plunging in the fight—
As if his single arm alone
Owned all the power of Arragon ?

LI.

“ For, by the prophet’s self ! so well
They now befit the garb of fear,
It were no easy task to tell,
Of all the valiant Christians here,
Which is the hero who could dream
That on his hand so late was shed
A portion of that lofty gleam
Of crested madness, which had led
The Franks in olden times to feast
The desert wild dogs of the East.

LII.

“ What ! silent all ? s’ death ! am I heard ?

From out that band, lead forth, I say,
The rebel slave !” but, ere the guard

Could haste his order to obey,
One of the silent prisoners stood

Unbending from among the rest,
And, folding, in a gloomy mood,

His chain-bound arms across his breast,
In calm, but stern resolve he eyed
The Turkish chief, and thus replied :—

LIII.

“ Behold ! alone, before thee stands

One whom, it seems, thou long’st to know—
One who must hear, with fettered hands,

Each taunt which thou may’st deign to throw
From that proud height, whence it is known

That every word can safe descend ;
Yet, Moslem, ’tis not fear alone

Which here usurps the power to bend
Those whom some heavy curse has placed
Upon thy mercy’s barren waste.

LIV.

“ Well knew we, when the throne of Heaven
Seemed closed awhile to misery's cries,
When our unhappy homes were given
To glut the triumph of surprise,
That it was vain to seek one breath
Of mercy 'neath the crescent's power ;
And, trust me, 'twas not dread of death
Which forces us, this galling hour,
To stand before thee and to bear
These chains, which yet we honoured wear.

LV.

“ Oh ! 'twas in vain one robber's bark
On from the swell of vengeance fled ;
It seems, to thee 'twas given to mark
The Corsair's ensign as he sped,
And 'mid the gulf of fate we fell
Still deeper in the black abyss :
God help me ! we can easily tell
How light a fate it were to this—
Even for a very life to be
Chained bondsmen on the friendless sea !

LVI.

“ Our fairest, once our happiest too
And loveliest of a lovely land,
The booty of thy blood-stained crew,
Must likewise fade beneath thy hand,
And pass their shortened days of gloom
Within thy harem’s cursed walls,
Till, like a friend, the wished-for tomb,
Which only such as thee appals,
Close on their grief to hide the crime
Of all-polluting love like thine.

LVII.

“ This is thy triumph—this the bleak,
The hopeless life which waits us now ;
Then, canst thou blame, that we did seek
Death quicker than thou wouldst allow ?
Oh ! it is well for thee to vaunt
Thy high Ottoman valour here,
And, with thy thousands round thee, taunt
Our ill success, and call it fear !
Here there are none, methinks, who may
Venture to doubt what thou wilt say !

LVIII.

“ But know, that when this band which waits
Their doom, untrembling, at thy feet,
Burst, yester-eve, their prison gates,
In hopes a nobler death to meet ;
So nearly had they pierced towards
The very entry of thy tent,
That, but for all thy thousand guards,
This single arm alone had bent,
In blood above thee, to exchange
A tyrant's wrong for deep revenge !”

LIX.

“ Accursed dog !” the Syrian said,
Struggling with passion's mastery ;
“ By Allah ! must I thus be made
A caitiff's jest : the slave shall die !
Seize on the Christian there !” he cried,
When from the crowd two guards did spring,
Who, grasping him on either side,
Prepared around his neck to fling
The bowstring, waiting but until
Their chief should further sign his will.

LX.

But, to bespeak the reader's grace
As for a time we change the scene,
And seek a moment to retrace
Our way towards the heroine
Of this our tale, whom we had left
The fairy tenant of a throne;
Yet there, of every hope bereft,
In sorrow, friendless, and alone—
Compelled in scenes of pomp to share,
It chilled her very soul to bear.

LXI.

While then, yon Eastern prince had wooed
Fair Ina, as for wooing's sake,
Now chafed-like—now in gentlest mood,
Bidding her know he would not take
Aught like refusal of her love;
So, many a grief oppressed her then,
That if, at times, she rose above
Their power, to be 'herself again';
'Twas without care or dread she brought
Herself to utter what she thought.

LXII.

But when at last, e'en though his slave,
Glowing in all her father's pride,
She fearlessly her answer gave,
And scorned to be the O'thman's bride—
Then, not unmoved, she heard his threat,
And marked the soldier's fiery glance ;
And when towards her, where she sate,
She saw the fettered band advance ;
Trembling and pale, the maiden cast
One look upon them as they passed—

LXIII.

Fearful of gazing on them, lest
In doing so she might reveal
All that, within itself, her breast
Was wildly struggling to conceal.
But now, when faintly trembling hung
Yon prisoner's life upon a breath,
When Achmet's hand was upward flung
To pass the signal of his death—
At once was every lesser thought,
In that one moment, all forgot ;

LXIV.

And, springing wildly, from the throne,
To kneel at the Ottoman's feet,
"All, all," she said, "shall be thine own!
But, in return, do I entreat,
That thy uplifted arm will spare
Him thou hast here condemned to die.
What! wilt thou scorn to hear my prayer?
Know then, proud chief, that also I
Wait only for thy word, to save
A Spanish honour in the grave!"

LXV.

She spoke, and, backward starting, raised
A poniard in her snowy hand,
And calmly on the Syrian gazed,
As waiting but his last command:
And, oh! so noble was her look,
Lit up in all its high resolve,
That even Achmet's anger shook;
And, fearful lest he might dissolve
The lovely spell, he only gazed
Upon her, silent, and amazed.

LXVI.

Till then, in Ina's Eastern dress,
The wretched prisoner knew her not ;
For, in that hour of bitterness,
Scarce even had her presence caught
His passing glance ;—but, when she sprung
So wildly from the queenly seat,
Her veil of tissue backward flung,
To kneel for him at Achmet's feet,
The truth—the day-flash of the whole—
Burst, almost maddening, on his soul !

LXVII.

He sought to speak, yet all in vain—
'Twas such a moment as denies
The power of words ; but, when again
He saw the fearless maiden rise,
Bold in that honour which had spoke
Itself unstained, which death defied,
With more than human strength he broke
Off from his guards on every side,
And sprung to Ina's feet to kiss
Her hand, and clasp it into his.

LXVIII.

" Together, then," he calmly said,
 " Unsevered, Ina, we shall die;
And heaven be thanked ! that it has made
 Our path towards eternity
So glad as this ! Oh ! may that God
 Whom we have loved forgive us now,
If, in despair, we break a rod
 Which we have bent to, till its blow
Has almost maddened us to rave
On heaven, and curse the life it gave !

LXIX.

" Give me thy dagger, this may be,
 My girl, a firmer hand than thine ;
And now, cursed tyrant, thou canst see
 How die the daughters of our line !
Back with thy minions ! If but dare
 One slave advance a step more near,
Upon that instant I do swear
 To break all ties which bind us here !
Hold back, I say !—'Tis well : and we
 At least, in dying, can be free !

LXX.

" Short is our parting, Ina, yet
 'Tis sorrow's sunset, and the prayer
Thy lips gave birth, when last we met,
 Is heard in heaven, and answered there !
The whispered wish that, in this scene
 Of life, we two might meet once more :
Thou true, as ever thou hadst been,
 And I unaltered, as before—
Thine, only thine ! Thank heaven ! the boon
Comes, in its mercy, then so soon.

LXXI.

" Nay, droop not, I am with thee, love,
 This, this shall be our bridal day ;
Already, do the saints above
 Chant thy pure spirit on its way.
But see, by heaven ! the bloodhounds close
 Upon us ; would that I instead .
Could singly die—but he who knows
 Our sorrows may forgive the deed :
—They come to part us ; we shall dwell
Henceforth in heaven—fare-thee-well !"



PALMYRA,

A VISION OF THE PAST.

I.

HAIL unto thee, Ideal Fancy, hail !

Whate'er thou art, sweet one, that lead'st away
The human mind to pierce the dusky veil

Of ages past, to triumph o'er decay,

And, as it were, to live, if but a day—

An hour, amid the light of years gone by—

Bidding the gulf of Time again display
Its long-claimed spoil, and, with a magic tie,
Linking unto the past the moments as they fly.

II.

Hail mistress of the soul ! with thee the mind

Forgets the duller world, and now can be

Right happily thy slave, so it do find

Some pleasant moments in thy company—

So it can freely wander forth with thee,

O'er thine own kingdom, be it dark or bright.

Come, dove-like offspring of eternity !

Replume thy wing, and, through the gathered night

Of many an age of time, hold thine untrameled flight.

III.

What tho' the hand of passing Time has swept

Away the grandeur, grandeur could not save ?

What tho' a thousand wasting years have kept

Their silent watch above Palmyra's grave ?

Still, may we not for one short moment waive

The thought of her deserted state, and go

Back to those years, when captive fortune gave

To her that power whose very wrecks do show

How mighty was its rise, how great its overthrow.

IV.

For, what is by-gone time ? what is the past,
But the unsealed future, down whose gray,
And shadowy vista we have power to cast
A look on ages that have died away ?
And now, behold the cloud of years which lay
Upon the desert Queen dissolves in air !
See how, at Fancy's touch, a living ray
Dawns on her fallen pomp, and brightens there
Thelight of other days—the soul of times that were—

V.

A vision of the past ! How calm the night
Rests on the favoured East, and sleepeth now,
Smiling beneath her canopy of light
In silver dream upon the world below—
And looking forth, in loveliness, to throw
Her wonted beauty on that varied land—
Her well beloved ; where the palm-trees grow
Up to her kiss, and where the desert sand
Sparkles, a jewelled Edom,² underneath her hand !

VI.

Ay, fairest of the night ! the moonbeams fall
On the wide glories of the Palmyrene,
Where, in expanse of light, the columned wall,
Archway and temple-portico are seen,
Rising away, in bold relief between
The many date groves that do shaded lie
Amid her grandeur, to adorn a scene
Which else would soulless be, and tire the eye
By the unvaried spread of its immensity.

VII.

A noble vision is it to behold
Palmyra, in an hour like this—to see
The beauty of an Eastern midnight fold
Its mantle thus upon her, and to be
Companion of those moments gay, when she
Laughs back the glances of the wooing night ;
When twine the moonbeams, in their revelry,
A Lydian drapery on each marble height ;
And, round the mighty whole, festoon their maze
of light:

VIII.

To see her pomp again restored—to lose
The mind in boundless thought, amid these grand,
These gorgeous monuments of power, that rose
To spread a sceptre o'er a barren land—
That bade the desert flourish to its hand,
Till, at the footstool of its lonely seat,
Wealth bent the knee, and Plenty took her stand:
The genii, at whose beck, did nations meet;
To place their gathered offerings at Palmyra's feet.

IX.

The grandeur of a dream !—a dream whose base
Is but a wandering thought, a rich-like spell
Of the mind's own creation, which doth raise
Those scenes ideal, where it loves to dwell :
A day-dream brightening on us, to expel
The memory of the present ; such is then
That lofty power, which, borne upon the swell
Of buoyant fancy, ope's to mortal ken
The gate of by-gone worlds, that seem to be again.

X.

Away !—from off the wing of centuries
Sweep we the cloud of age, the dust of time,
And thus, again, behold Palmyra rise
As once she was ; the glory of her prime
Again is her's :—the soul of the sublime
Bends o'er the vision. Beautiful art thou,
Queen of the desert ! and ye stars that climb
The path of heaven, like th' embodied vow
Of beauty breathing earthward, do ye sparkle now !

XI.

Here, on this rocky steep, may we repose,
To trace the varied scene, the wilds that lie
Calm in the moonlight, and these massy rows
Of shining palaces, which, towering high,
Rise like a beacon to the wanderer's eye.
And when at length, from yonder distant height
The traveller of the desert can descry
Palmyra rising, in her robes of light,
Well may he bless his gods, and joy him at the sight—

XII.

For there his toil is at an end : the seat
Of rest extends before him, and the thought
Of dangers past—the desert's parching heat—
The prowling Arab—all may be forgot,
When thus he sees the long, long-wished-for spot
Where he may bid his camels rest, and where
He may awhile enjoy the comforts bought
By days of withering toil, of restless care,
And many a desert march it tried the soul to bear.

XIII.

But hark ! the sound of music stirs below,
Where blend the date-trees in unbroken shade ;
And many a moving light doth sparkle now,
Within the gloom of yonder colonnade.
Ay, there again has revel gladness made
Its flowery resting-place ; there pleasure's wings
Soar on the breath of Eastern music, played
By Tadmor's minstrel sons, who sweep the strings,
To chant the mighty 'daughter of an hundred kings ;'

XIV.

There sits Zenobia, cinctured in the grace
Of loftiest beauty, smiling to extend
Her queenly courtesy to many a race
Of subject chieftains, who around her bend.
Softly, methinks, the aëriel sounds ascend
From the far city ; and, to me they seem
Like those ideal symphonies, that blend
With the last rays of faeryland, which beam
On the unclosing curtains of a morning dream !

XV.

And mighty are the varied thoughts that cast
Their spells around us, as we gaze upon
This magic picture of the visioned past,
Long lingering on it, till the whole be gone.
Calmly the moon-beams yet are resting on
The wooded hollow and the sculptured height ;
Here may we rest us then, and be alone
With Tadmor in her glory, till the night
Of truth descend to close the vision from the sight.

THE
PARTING HOUR.

“ A mind at peace with all below,
A heart whose love is innocent.”

BYRON'S *Hebrew Melodies*.

BRIGHTLY as ever
The sunbeams yet
On mountain and valley
In gladness set ;
And still, oh still
They merrily shine
On thy dark green olive,
And clustering vine—
And again, once again,
Will the dawning cast
It's glory around thee,
When night is past,

While under its wing
Will the flowerets spring;
And lovely as ever thou shall be,
The Lark thy matins caroling,
My native Hungary !

Then why, oh why
Is a ruthless hand
Raised over thy children,
My native land ?
Oh why may the foot
Of the stranger dare
To trample in blood
On a spot so fair ?—
For, glad as it seems,
There's many a wile
Lurks under the peace
Of thy evening smile :
And a cloud unseen hangs over thee,
My once glad Hungary !

No more, 'tis said,
Can we safely dwell

In the once gay homes,
We have loved so well :
Thy songs are hushed,
And solitary lies
Each vineyard whence
They were wont to rise.
But tho' thou art changed—
Tho' thy joys be set,
There's many a heart
Can love thee yet ;
And many a band
Of thy bravest stand,
Unchanged, around thy homes, to be
The safeguard of their fatherland,
My peerless Hungary!

Long had the sun of evening spread
A golden veil on Eimberg's brow,
And, from the mountain eyry, shed
Its lustre on the woods below ;
And long the last retiring beam
Of day was on the landscape flung,
When, bending by the Danube's stream,

'Twas thus the pride of Tynau sung—
The blue-eyed Emma, on whose cheek
It may in truth right well be said,
That dawning beauty, like the streak
Of early morning, played ;
And on whose graceful form the light
Of mellow eve so softly shone,
That, gazing on her, fancy might
Lead off the mind to dream upon
The beings of that fairy land,
Whence spring the sunbeams on their way—
These genii of the hours who stand
On high, to close, with beauty's hand,
The golden gates of day.

Beneath an ancient tree she stood,
Her eye at times all thoughtful cast
Along the meadow and the wood,
Where now the twilight gathered fast ;
While at her feet the river broke
Slowly and scarcely heard along,
As, on the silence, Emma woke
The music of her song.

And all around her far and near
Was hushed so still, it seemed to be
That nature's self, with list'ning ear,
Had bent on every side to hear
Her maiden minstrelsy.

'Twas such a time as seems to melt
The soul into the passing hour,
And deep the lovely Emma felt,
I ween, the magic of its power,
When gazing on the scene which lay
Spread out so calm before her then :—
The forest in its shade of grey,
The vine-topped hill, the misty glen,
The noble river as it bare
Its waters monarch-like between
The wooded banks and meadows, where
At times some cottage home was seen
Rearing its trelliced walls of white—
A speck amid the distant trees,
As bent their foliage to the light
And fitful evening breeze ;
Or, when again, perchance, her eye

Would turn toward the sunny west,
To mark the evening glories die
On Eimberg's mountain crest,
Whence, smiling its farewell, did sweep
One sunbeam o'er the neighbouring wood,
Where, 'mid the forest's sloping steep,
Proud Tynau's walls and bannered keep
In gloomy silence stood,
Resting their shadows on the deep,
Reposing solitude.

But now the jewelled eve had set,
And o'er the mountains died away ;
Still here young Emma lingered yet,
Regardless of the parting day,
To gaze in that calm reverie
Which steals its influence on the breast,
When thus at eventide we see
All nature sink to rest.
Her song had ceased, and nought was heard
To stir upon the air—
Night, girt in silence, held his ward
Of gloom so deeply there—

Till as upon the evening's close
The last faint twilight fell,
Slow up the distant valley rose
The chime of Altoph's bell,
And on the sleeping quiet around,
Burst heavily the one
Loud roll and widely-echoed sound,
Of Tynau's evening gun.

Then, startled from her thoughtful trance,
The maiden saw, with anxious eye,
That sped the shade of night's advance
So quickly over earth and sky ;
And, folding closer to her waist
The scarf which on her bosom lay,
She now had turned aside to haste
Upon her homeward way ;
When, sudden on her path, and near
Herself, she marked a soldier stand,
Leaning in silence on a spear,
Whose shaft of silver did appear
To bend beneath his hand.

At such a time, in such a place,
With darkness closing round her fast,
We may not wonder that some trace
Of fear o'er Emma's features past,
When thus she found a stranger's gaze
Intensely fixed upon her ; yet
Calm was her eye when, through the haze
Of gathering night, with his it met—
As if the maiden feared to seem
Aught anxious then, but rather sought
Calm-like to have the stranger deem
That she did tremble not.
But when she heard him fondly speak
The whisper of her name,
At once across fair Emma's cheek
A richer colour came;
And, waving hastily aside
The ringlets on her brow,
" What can it be ?" she smiling said ;
" Aldringer ! is it thou ?"

" Yes, Emma, fairest, I alone ;
But what a change this cap hath wrought,

That thou wouldst also now have gone,
And tried to think thou knew'st me not !
There was a time when I did think
All earth could not have changed me so,
That from me Emma's self would shrink,
As if she feared my presence—no !
I wrong thee then ? thou smilest too ?
Nay, Emma, faith I had great lack
Of love to doubt thee : come, I'd sue
Again thy lovely anger back,
So sweet it is. I'll e'en kneel down
Here at thy feet, if thou wilt deign
But to recall that loveliest frown,
To smile't away again."

"Now Aldringer, the hour is late—
I may not tarry longer here,"
The maiden said ; "the castle gate
Has long been closed on us, I fear—
But what," she gayly added, "could
Have had on thee the wondrous power
To bid thee wander in the wood,
Thus armed, at such an hour ?"

"Perchance to meet thee," he replied ;

"Nay, start not ! for it was I ween
By merest chance, too, I espied

Thy fairy footsteps on the green,
And when we all so safeless find
Where the reveille of war is heard,
Thou canst not blame me, if behind
I lingered as thy guard.

And, by thy loveliest self ! to me
No happier fate could hope foretell
Than that, in loves knight-errantry,
It may be mine through life to be
Thy guardian sentinel."

"But Emma, stay a moment yet ;

• Why wouldst thou, fairest, part so soon ?

What tho' the envious day be set ?

Already, see, the silver moon
Is rising o'er the Shemnitz hill,
To gem for thee the brow of night ;
And, as of old, it shineth still
My Emma's homeward path to light—

Then why away ? when this, lone one !

May be the last hour we shall meet !

Too soon the now departed sun

Will gain once more its wonted seat

On heaven's blue field, and rising cast

The light of dawn around, to tell

That these last moments will have passed

When we might take farewell."

" To-morrow ! Emma—'tis a word

Which steals in sadness on the ear :

To-morrow, and thy songs are heard

No more to rise, enchantress, here ;

The wood, the prairie and the stream—

All, all, will then appear to be

So dull and lone, to us, 'twill seem

• Their wonted gladness goes with thee.

But, what carest thou ?—the world say

'Tis easy learning to forget ;

And soon, in scenes more rich and gay,

Thou mayest be happier yet :—

Ay, when away in proud Vienne,

Thy beauty, fairest, will be sung

When thou becomest, Emma, then
The praised of every tongue ;
When, at thy footstool, prince and peer
Bend casque and diadem,
What can there be thou leavest here
Will make thee think of them ?”

“ Oh ! Karl, it is ever so,”

Replied the maid ; “ and cruel thou art
To speak thus, and embitter now
The hour so short in which we part.
What ! think you that I can the less
With many a sorrow leave behind
Those scenes where early happiness
First shed its dawn upon the mind ;
Because I go to breathe more near
That gay, that richer world of thine,
Whose splendour may perhaps appear
All bright and dazzling for a time ?
Think’st thou the ties which life has set
Around us are so easily broke ;
That each affection may forget
The spot where it awoke,

And, twined around the heart, to breathe
Its incense on it, and to fling,
Over the years of life, a wreath
Of flowerets ever blossoming,
Like Eden's roses, underneath
A never-ending spring?

" But, Aldringer, thou did'st not speak
Now as the thought came on thee—nay ;
Thou couldst not deem the mind so weak,
The heart so cold, as thou did'st say :—
Yet, yet, perhaps I'm wrong—ye go
All now into the world, to see
Its happiness, to swell the flow
Of glory's stirring pageantry ;
And, it may be that thou wouldst stand
Untrammelled there—would'st hence forget
All thy past follies, Karl—and
That ever we have met."

" Never ! I vow to thee—unless—
But, Emma—nay that thought will go

Down with me to the grave ; 'twill bless
The latest look this heart can throw
Back on the world—yet thou dost jest,
And canst, in faith, so archly wield
Thy cunning words, that I at best
Must give the up the field ;
Come, then—a truce—nay let us heal
Our feud in smiles, lest I do seek,
If thou still frownest so, to seal
The treaty on thy cheek !

“ But why in parting should we leave
One thought to shadow in regret ?
There's days of happiness may weave
Their joys around us fondly yet.
Could we but know that every link
Allurement binds would lose its power—
That thou wouldst, Emma, sometimes think
Of this lone parting hour,
When pleasure's summer halo plays
In all its witchery over thee ;
When words but meet thy ear to praise
And flattery bends the knee.”

"Oh!" she replied, "why art thou still
Lost in that cold and doubting mood?
Nay—now I scarcely have the will
To change thy thoughts—e'en if I could—
But yet wherever I do go—
Believe me, if but once, and let
All doubt give way; for Karl, know
I never can forget!"

"Enough, enough," he said, "and blest
Be the sweet words—for they will bind
Hope round the heart, and calm to rest
The care-born wanderings of the mind;
And should the gloom of doubt or fear
Fall ever dark on memory's track,
Then will each word a spell appear
To conjure gladness back.—
Farewell then, and should sorrow lower
On thee, should danger e'er betide,
Know, that, in fortune's darkest hour,
There will be at thy side

An arm to shield, a hand to save—

One who, believe me, aye shall be

Ready through every ill to brave

A world itself for thee !”

NOTES TO INA.

1. Verse 7.—Page 12.

“when onward ride

The spirits of the Samyel.”

Generally pronounced, Sam-i'-el.—The hot wind of the desert, better known, perhaps, to the English reader, under its Arab name of Simoom.

2. Verse 18.—Page 18.

Referring, as they do, to events of which the reader has not been previously informed, I may here mention, in illustration of this and the preceding verse, that the general outline of INA is, in some degree, taken from a passage in the adventures of a Turkish chief, or rather freebooter, who, many centuries ago, made a practice of seizing his less powerful countrymen on their native coasts, when returning loaded with the spoil of some piratical descent upon the European shores of the Mediterranean, “making himself great,” as a Turkish writer has it, “in slaves and christian gold,” without himself incurring the dangers of a descent upon the Infidel.

3. Verse 30.—Page 24.

“Till with the speed of Asrail's wing.”

Asrail, or Asvail, is the angel of death, who, according to Ma-

hometan belief, attends on the death-bed of the faithful, to carry the soul to its after-resting-place.

4. Verse 42.—Page 25.

“The golden spears of Istambol.”

The name given by the Turks to Constantinople. It is variously written, sometimes Stamboul, at others, Stampoli, or, as above, Istambol.

5. Verse 34.—Page 26.

“When first they broke on Eiram’s bower.”

The garden of Eiram, is the terrestrial paradise of the Musselmen—the Eden of the Hebrew writers.

NOTES TO PALMYRA.

1. Verse 3.—Page 48.

“The grandeur, grandeur could not save.”

It is but proper to state, that the idea of this line is borrowed from a poem (by an anonymous writer I think,) which some time ago appeared in the London journals.

2. Verse 5.—Page 49.

“Sparkles a jewelled Edom,” &c.

The sea of Edom (the Red Sea) is celebrated for its brilliant phosphoretic appearance, during the night.



